Catalogue of the Memorial Exhibition of Works by the Late Charles Walter Stetson

MAY, 1913

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Toledo

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THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
TOLEDO

CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY CHARLES WALTER STETSON MAY, 1913

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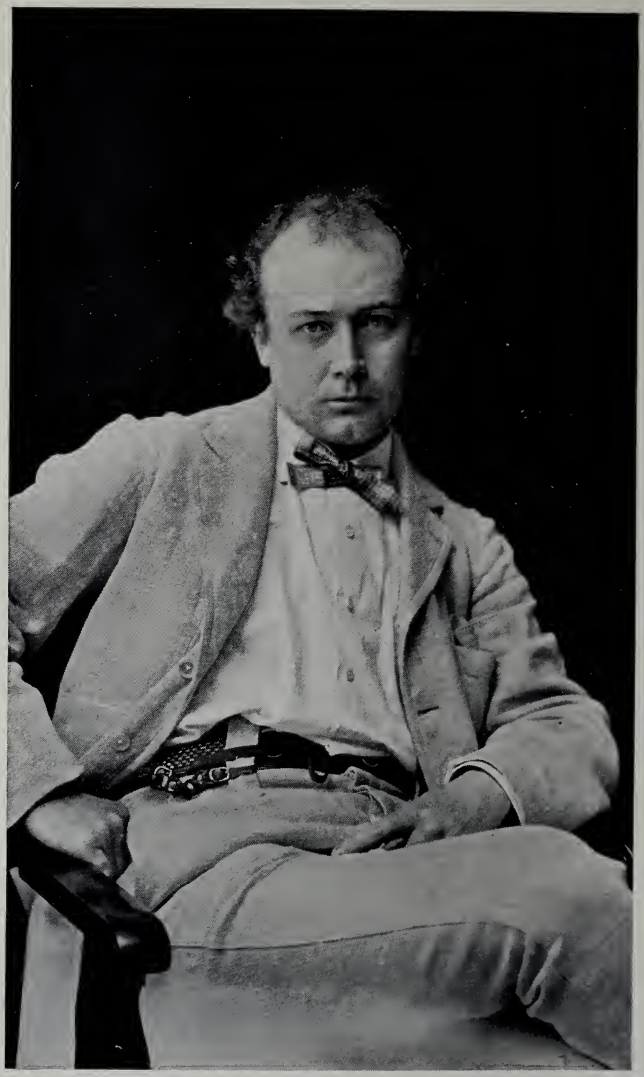

Charles Walter Stetson
1858–1911

CHARLES WALTER STETSON

THE artist being the key to his own art, it is a perfectly natural impulse which before the work of any creative worker asks to know something of the facts and forces that have made him what he is. Of contemporary artists we do usually broadly know these facts. The story of many—perhaps of most painters can be told in an outline of events; where they studied, under what masters, exposed to what "influences," in what countries they have worked and what honours have been awarded them—these are matters of more or less common knowledge, easily retold. But in the case of an artist who was of no school, had no master, came under no "official" influences, exhibited comparatively rarely, and whose life was almost wholly passed remote from the centres, movements, and interests of the art world, so that he was a shadowy figure even to his contemporaries,—in the case of such an artist the history of his art-life is necessarily but the story of his individual life, and can be told only when the passing of the individual has transmuted this, too, into history.

Such an artist was Charles Walter Stetson.

He was born on the 25th of March, 1858, in Tiverton Four Corners, a picturesque portion of Rhode Island, where his father, the Reverend Joshua Stetson, was then preaching.

He came (despite the evident Danish origin of the family name) of pure New England—and English—

stock on both sides; his father being a descendant of that Cornet Robert Stetson, whose home is still preserved as the gathering place of the Stetson Kindred, while his mother was a daughter of Judge Samuel Steere of Gloucester, R. I., a man of considerable local influence. On both sides also it was a lineage strictly of New England in a deeper sense, marked by the New England leaning towards books, towards the law, the ministry, the school and the New England farm, with a conspicuous absence of the trading element.

He was so much the youngest of a family of four children that in the matter of companionship he grew up almost as an only child might have done. From Tiverton while he was still very little, the family removed to Taunton, Mass., where the father served as City Missionary during the Civil War. Thereafter they moved frequently, following the rule of the Baptist congregation, ("I think we went to nearly all the New England States, as the churches 'called' "—he has written,)—and from his earliest memories the boy was acquainted with the hardships attending this ambulatory and precarious existence of a poor New England pastor's family, of those days, with its constant changes, often uncongenial homes, and meagre salary—too often paid "in kind."

Of his early youth he has left this record:

"As is customary, they say I began to draw when I was four years old. Indeed I remember drawing at that time, but it is certain I did not begin to color until about 1872 and then in the most irregular way and as a relief from school work. In all our wanderings, which were mostly in the country towns of the different States, I had to my knowledge never seen any painting worth mention; surely none that had influenced me in any way; but I saw

many fair engravings and of these I was very fond."

In 1869 the family settled finally in Providence, and in the public schools of that city the boy received so much of his education as he was ever to owe to institutions. By the time he was ready to graduate from the High School, he had already made up his mind to be a painter.

All America at that time was more or less barren ground for art; but in all America it would have been hard to find a less promising field for the development of a future colorist than was offered by the small, rich manufacturing town of Providence. Today Providence is the seat of one of the foremost technical art-schools of the country, possesses an art-club with a large membership and an art club-house which is the envy of larger cities; but in the Providence of a generation ago these things either were not or were just beginning to be. The city then owed its fame to its Baptist University, to its "Arcade," celebrated in the geographies of childhood, and to the wealth of its leading citizens, locally ranked "by the number of spindles in their mills." There was little promise of that culture from which art is nourished. The richest city of its size in America, in the artist's boyhood, owned neither a public library nor a public park. Nature, however, had been more generous; the city of Roger Williams was and is one of the fairest cities of America, rich in hills, trees, a noble, if neglected, water front, and at that time it had not yet been despoiled of its attractive central sheet of water—the "Cove," a natural distinction resembling it uniquely among cities to Hamburg.

In this environment, a few fellow-artists, upheld by still fewer art lovers were struggling bravely for better things; of their struggle he quickly made himself a part. Of the little circle he was the youngest, it is likely the poorest,

and it is certain the most untaught member; but his elder brothers in art were swift to recognize the quality of the new-comer's gift and generous to sustain it with sympathy and encouragement. He was soon working with them on all their committees and juries—the only time in his life when he was thus associated.

He has described his own artistic growth : "My love of color did not show itself with any degree of force till about 1876, and I am sure the things I did then were as bad and crude as anyone could possibly do. They were mostly marines, with terribly pink skies, ghastly blue water and chocolate colored sands." The next stage was landscape, comprising "the most painfully minute studies in black and white, of trees and rocks, after the will of Mr. Ruskin." Towards 1878 he records "suffering a very serious change," giving up the minute studies and crude coloring, and beginning "to paint broadly," with an approach to the tones of his later work. "I suppose the fact was that in 1876 I had made up my mind to be a painter, and in 1878 I began to understand what a painter's vocation really is. At this time I hired a studio and went to work in earnest, repeating the well-worn starvation tale, which caused me to give up the studio and return to my father's house for a time." A brief time, however ; he soon had another studio and thereafter was never, except most transiently, without one. He found, too, one unfailing patron who kept him from quite repeating the "starvation tale." From this date, also, he began to send to exhibitions.

The well-trained art-student of today can hardly imagine such a life. He was wholly untaught, not because of any wilful preference or that he had any pride in so being—(the early journals are full of a most youthful despair in having to find his unaided way, and of deepest

misgivings for the outcome,)—but in his own city there was no one to teach him, and he lacked the means of going elsewhere. Such meagre opportunities as arose were avidly seized upon—the chance to draw from a costume-model at a night-class, the rare opportunity to loan his studio for the privilege of sharing an afternoon's model. Nobody at that time was working from the nude in Providence (these were the days in which the artist, Hazeltine, could still be prosecuted for having in his possession a nude "Narcissus,")—and it was a gay remembrance in later years that when the young painter announced his determination to secure nude models *quand même*, he was seriously advised by a cautious elder to first take out a license at the City Hall. So late as the very end of 1882 he notes: "A professional model (male) called yesterday and wanted work. It is the first instance of the kind in my career."

Without money, without models, without instruction, without even, as he frequently lamented, sufficient time for study, because of the necessity of painting things to sell if he was to have a studio at all, still he worked on ambitiously. Pictures of his, to no one's surprise so much as the artist's, began to find their way into the exhibitions of the Pennsylvania Academy, the Boston Art Club, and others, arousing the attention of critics and the interest of such a man as James Jackson Jarvis, who made a pilgrimage to the obscure studio in Providence and predicted a future for the painter. They drew also from the painter, Champney, the prophecy—"This man is wonderful now; wait until he has worked out to his yet undeveloped self and the result will be genius." One of the first to encourage him was the critic and writer, Charles DeKay.

One immediate effect of the constant poverty was that

it compelled the painter to paint *pictures* from the outset. He had to—if he was to live. Every study from the model had to take the form of a little composition, for upon the sale of each as soon as completed depended the possibility of existence of another. This, deplored at the time as a last misfortune by the youth who keenly felt his lack of all skill and his need "to learn everything," was looked back upon in later years with a different vision and accounted *not* all loss. It retarded, doubtless, much valuable detailed study and acquisition, yet the severe discipline of having to view everything—even the model—in relation to other things and from a point of view fundamentally artistic had its own value, training many of the picture-making faculties, the absence or weakness of which he lived to deplore in many makers of beautiful "studies" from the nude. Too many pictures on the walls of international exhibitions remain but "beautiful studies" to the end.

The first external event of importance to his art occurred in 1882 when with Mr. George W. Whitaker, now the dean of Providence artists, he made his first sketching trip to the Maritime Provinces. It was also the first important outing of his life. What it meant to him is poignantly summed in a single phrase from the faithful note-book, "If European scenery is better than this I should die of a rupture of the heart!"

His companion of the trip, writing after the painter's death, recalls his love of "the great willows at Grand Prè" which "he painted beautifully. The great dykes reaching far out into the Bay of Fundy, and along the famous Gaspereaux River, the many gabled barns covered with yellow and brown mosses, they were so old, the tall poplars growing here in their perfection, the quaint rustic bridges, all these were idealized by his

facile brush." "He was quick in his observation of fugitive effects, like cloud shadows falling upon landscape and could give a transcript to a nicety." This faculty he always retained. His brain was like a sensitized plate, requiring but an instant to absorb impressions which he could afterwards reproduce at will—in some cases long years after, so perfectly that the very moment and mood of sea or sky, landscape or human aspect was recognizable by those who had shared it with him.

On their return the two painters held an exhibition of their work, recorded as "a flat failure." Fragments of the flat failure are preserved in "Shad Nets," "Near the Ancient Burying Ground," etc., in the present exhibition.

About this time, as he had formerly taught himself to color, he now taught himself to etch. In 1882 he gave a "Talk on Etching" before the Providence Art Club, illustrating it by a bitten plate. Some of these early etchings coming under the notice of Mr. Beriah Wall led to a commission for plates for a catalogue to be issued for the sale of Mr. Wall's collection of pictures in New York, and this to a still more important one, for thirteen plates from pictures in the collection, chiefly by French Masters.

Undertaken with the courage of desperation, the thirteen plates (about 20 x 20 in size) were all etched within the year, to the accompaniment of a greater or less disheartenment as the etcher alternately condemned himself for a mere "experimenter with novel arms" or decided there were "good points in each, enough perhaps to make them worthy of being called good plates." But that he was never made for a reproductive etcher, he was convinced. "To strive day after day to express another man's thought when I have burning thoughts of

my own to say," was no slight torment, but he brought to the task a New England conscience.

Etching was to remain only an episode of his early art-life. It retained all its fascination for him, and he was always planning a return to it. What it stood for otherwise, in his mind, was expressed in a trick of classifying the artists he knew as being with or without an "etcher's temperament."

The year of the thirteen etchings was memorable for two other events of major importance to the artist—his marriage and the first complete exhibition of his work in the Providence Art Club Gallery. This was a success leading to a greater one. Mr. Noyes, of the Boston firm of Noyes & Blakeslee, was one of the visitors from without, and obtained the painter's somewhat reluctant consent to show the pictures in Boston. Of this Boston exhibition John Boyle O'Reilly wrote as follows:

"All the immemorial plaints of unrecognized genius become ridiculous before the success of the young Providence painter who, unheard of at the beginning of the week, at its end saw his pictures taken up at his own prices as fond possessions by collectors whose endorsement by purchase makes an artist's reputation." "In any capital of the world," he affirmed, "these pictures would attract attention." Peter Brooks, Martin Brimmer, Thomas Clark and others were among the buyers.

Meantime the artist went on with his etching. Portraiture also had its turn, and in the years immediately following the Boston success he painted many of the "leading citizens,"—Mayor Doyle, Governor Lippitt, Judge Carpenter, and others.

Almost without exception the critics who had written of the exhibition had compared the Rhode Island artist to the great Italians. He was variously accused of imi-

tating Giorgione, Bellini, Monticelli and others, men whose works he had never seen, even in black and white reproductions; in some cases, whose names he had never heard. When they did not compare him to these, they compared him to Boecklin, a comparison which drawing from the artist then the query—"Boecklin—who is he?"—was to become in later years by turns an amusement and a thorn in the side. Both comparisons pursued him through life; in his very last exhibition, in Paris, in 1910, there were not wanting critics to make anew the ancient discovery—that he resembled Giorgione, Bellini, etc.,—that he resembled Boecklin.

He was at least as much annoyed as flattered, but the resemblances were ineradicable—the bent beyond any power of his to alter. Not without some truth a later critic settled the matter by decisively stating "Stetson was born a young Old Master."

Except for the trip to the Provinces and for visits to Philadelphia to the home of two of his earliest patrons and kindest friends, Mr. and Mrs. George Vaux Cresson, he had yet been almost nowhere and seen nothing. Museums were still in their childhood, exhibitions few and far between, comparatively, and such as there were he rarely attended. It was an event in his life when he saw, in the collection of James Jackson Jarvis, his first "Titian," and other great names, an event of the first magnitude when he saw the Watts exhibition at the Metropolitan.

But if he had not seen, he had read and imagined. He had taught himself both French and German and in all three languages he read, insatiably and omnivorously, limited only by the limited access to libraries. If he acknowledged no debt to Ruskin for the "painful black and white studies," he owned an inextinguishable one

for "Modern Painters," and like word-paintings. To the influence of this reading, more than to any one thing, he himself attributed the quality of his own work. It was in the effort to realize this internal vision of a great art, and to color as gloriously as his unseen, imagined colorists, that he insensibly evolved his own unique color and art. But he imagined altogether too well. When in later years he came at last to see the famous galleries of the world, his first emotion was of intense disappointment. No one of the masterpieces of art equalled his conception of it. And though he grew in time to love the Venetians to whom he had been so often resembled, it was the Northern men, and the severe early Florentines who had his deepest affections. Giorgione, Veronese and Tintoret were dear to him; Quentin Matsys and Albert Durer were still dearer.

Next to his reading, he ranked as influences poetry and music—both arts more to him, if possible, than his own. The mysterious relation between "sound music and color music" enthralled him. Color and music both he defined as "matters of vibration, controlled by a specially gifted soul," and the colorist's palette was for him "a stringed instrument," the pigments thereon ("and they need not be over seven") the notes of the natural scale upon which the artist played, "stopping a string here, leaving one open there, or playing two together." He makes haste to add—"You may think I am speaking of the painter perhaps. That would be a great error. I am speaking *only of the colorist.*"—And colorists he knew to be extremely rare. "Count upon your fingers the great musical composers and on the same fingers you may count the great colorists of the world." Not even the sculptors, he insisted, cared

more for form than the great colorists, and "the perfect gifts of color and form" he believed would always be found to go together. With equal warmth he maintained great colorists were invariably "realists, in the right sense of the word"—"the very facts of color making it necessary to color something definite," demanding material "soundly and rightly constructed." It was also of the very essence of their quality that they should be "sane, strong, calm, even in the magnificent throes of their passion, creating their pictures, not of bloodless phantasms, but even in the highest flight of the imagination, of warm flesh, palpitating with living blood, in generous sunlight or odorous, habitable shadow. The colors of spooks and sick fancies are not beautiful; therefore the colorist turns naturally to all that is most wholesome in the world." "Why should men spend their lives searching for a perfect red, an irreproachable yellow, to match the unsullied blue of the lapis-lazuli? Because God saw fit to permit colorists to be born, and because there are tints in the cheek of a child, the throat of a woman, in the infinitely tender carnations of dawn and the trembling gold of sunset, which no mortal brush can copy with any pigment at our command; and those things and the things for which they stand here have touched the souls of artists and they long to show what they know of them, to fix them for all mankind, not alone for what they are, but because the colorist feels them to be visible symbols of an invisible reality."

The feeling that it was "not refined and cultured" to love color, was very prevalent about the time he began to paint, and with the "spasms of refined French grey" which swept over the world, aroused his scorn. Such spasms might come and go; the world remained,

"filled with color,"—the most beautiful hues being given to "such things as are loveliest and most precious, until color has become the type of Love and the symbol of Life—Life, sensuous, joyous, wholesome, and fruitful, which changes the gray of death to the bud and blossom of Spring." The making of color by colorists was for him "invariably the expression of a healthy, vigorous and fearless soul." In the decay of an artist's color-sense you might always find "inevitably recorded" the decay of his mind and the weakening of his soul. "Color is an angel who records with pitiless exactness any change in us." "No one can really understand color itself—not even the colorist; it is the one mystery of Art, and it is a divine one."

It was evident these were not exactly the sentiments prevalent in the scientific schools of color, of his day. Their formulas, which he used to describe as "For an adult—so many drops a day, in a little oil," moved him to the frankest disagreement with some of his best friends. His final refuge was always the same—"Produce your colorists, made by these methods."

The artist, too, he took seriously. "Woe is his, if his mind and heart have not kept pace with his skill, for his works are witnesses for or against his soul, whether he wills it or not. You may read his inmost life though he seek to cover it from you. What he hates, what he loves, wherein he is tempted, what he suffers, are open to you—to you who have the gift to read, and most may have it."

If he himself was profoundly moved by music, not less did his color move musicians. They were ever among the best lovers of his work. A single incident, illustrative of their responsiveness, became a favorite studio tale. The picture called "Smugglers" was still on the

artist's easel when chance led three musicians, on successive days, to his studio. The first exclaimed, "Siegfried's Funeral March!" the second, "The Niebelungen-Lied!"; the third, "It is MacDowell's Eroica!"

The second great outing of the artist's life was to Southern California, where he spent with his family the year of '88-'89. It was his first experience of southern lands. Born and reared under grey Northern skies, his dreams had always been of the South. Not less than Shelley did, he loved the sun. In the sober, drab atmosphere of a manufacturing town, his inner vision had been of temples, porticoes and palaces, of luxuriant gardens and Southern moons, and the figures which inhabited this land of his dreams he clothed in garments glowing with color and light. "The Beggar in a Pleasure Garden" painted in his earliest youth, illustrates both this yearning imagination and the unforgetting human heart; chords which vibrated throughout his life with almost equal intensity.

The skies, the moons, the gardens and color of his desire he found in California; for the temple and the fountain, the palace and the gorgeous human element, he had to wait for Italy.

Untiring in his study of nature, spending hours out of doors every day till the end of his life, his notebook always at hand—like Inness, like Millet, like many of the great landscapists, it was still his faith that landscapes could be best studied out of doors and best painted within them. Nor would he be limited by the nature he had seen.

At one time he had been fond of using in his compositions certain tall, slender trees, which his artist friends made a jest of and an upbraiding, saying he had no right to paint what he had not seen. The serene reply was

that he *had* seen them—in his dreams; that he needed them in his compositions; and that they were surely somewhere in the world. Arriving in Southern California on one of those warm December nights, full of moonlight, when not only color but form are incredibly revealed, he was enchanted to find, bordering the roadways, "his trees"—the tall and slender eucalypti. Innumerable careful studies did not enable him to add anything essential to the truth of his earlier renderings; the spirit of the tree he had always known. It was no isolated experience. He had always been inventing processions—curving lines of vivid figures winding up or down hills, long lines of sombre cowled figures, torrents of dancing girls. He found them all in Italy, where to be summoned to the window to "see a Stetson" was a regular incident of family life. In Italy, too, he found the bosky thicket, the "odorous habitable shade," the emerald meadows set with gay figures, the clustered trees, the temples, the fountains and carved seats of stone he had created in his New England attic. It was no wonder he loved Rome, seeing that he had been painting her all his life. She had also for him her spiritual message. The heir of his intense Puritan forefathers, he was not less intensely religious than they, merely he was a religious pagan.

In 1890, called from California by his mother's death, he took up once more his New England life, and for four years went on painting quietly. But absence had done its work; he felt detached. He was himself aware that he had grown farther and farther from the artistic currents of the day; it will seem strange enough now to hear that he ranked then as an ultra-impressionist. So little sympathy he met from the juries of that period that he soon ceased even to enter his work, but continued from

time to time to exhibit singly, slowly enlarging the little circle of those who understood his peculiar art, and accepting with serenity the fact that only a few would so understand. Very catholic in his own sympathies and appreciative of the art of others, he had neither then nor later any quarrel with their indifference towards his. He was the first to feel what separated them. "They are quite right to reject me," he said more than once. "My pictures do not go with theirs; one must think of the whole exhibition."

Nevertheless, this, with the growing deafness which was perhaps the first sign of failing health and nerves, insensibly withdrew him more and more into himself. It was never denied that he could color, and sometimes he grew a little weary of the colorist's label. "They always speak of my color," he said, "Some day they will discover that my line is quite as good—only it is a colorist's line, not outline, nor yet the line of a draughtsman merely." (He spoke of "seeing his line as color.") The first critic to do this justice to him won a lasting place in his regard.

In 1894, upon the occasion of his second marriage, he returned again to California, this time to remain for seven years, except for one momentous interruption—his first trip to Europe. During this second stay, he built an open air corral about his studio and had the satisfaction of posing his models in the sunlight. These years, of an impossible difficulty from a practical standpoint, were of large importance to his art. Commercially—it was burying himself alive.

In 1897 the long-delayed visit to Europe was at last made. Few are the modern artists who can imagine that experience. Almost forty years old, without one art-school experience behind him and with his own art

fully matured, he confronted the entire Art of Europe, Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, England, Italy—all came in for a brief survey and study,—and the humanity of the various countries appealed to him quite as strongly as their art-galleries. From the moment of reaching Italy, and more especially Rome, it was clear to those who knew him best that he could never be quite happy anywhere else. He had found his natural place. After Italy, not all the beauty of California could console him for the lack of that subtler beauty—the dower of the human—which so much appealed to him that it invaded every canvas. Hardly a picture of his exists which has not its little human trace. In Italy the humanist, the pagan, the colorist were all reconciled. In no spot of the whole globe did he ever feel himself so instantly and so much at home; with a loyal sigh he acknowledged his regret that it was so. Nevertheless he was also a lover of his own country, and, firm in the faith that America was the place for an American artist, he returned with the steadfast purpose of working there. California was finally renounced for Boston and the almost forgotten life of the East taken up with resolution.

Fate, however, was kind—if cruelly so. The inherited resistant fibre and will which had so long hidden from all but a few the fact that he had never been really strong, began to give way. In England he had had a first severe attack of grippe, coming at a time of great strain otherwise, and he never really recovered; thereafter each year brought its recurrent attack, sowing the seeds of deeper mischief. At the end of the first winter there was a complete breakdown. A summer of floating on Dutch canals sent him back, rich in water-colors; to a second winter and its round of exhibitions (which

included seven cities and were the last ever made in America)—ending in a second collapse. The studio was hastily broken up, and this time it was to Italy he turned —"for a year or two" of rest.

He was never strong enough to return. Nine years of Rome were given him—years rich in accomplishment and labour, against which the steady inroads of a mortal disease, with its periodic acute breakdowns, could make no permanent headway. Again and again the serene will overcame. Italy was left only for the summer voyages to Northern ports, which were his keenest delight, and once to oversee his Paris exhibition. The sea divided his love with Italy. Undertaken each time when exhaustion was complete, again and again these voyages prolonged his life and sent him back to another term of work. He painted literally to the end of his life, only laying down his brushes to go to the surgical clinic from which he was not to return. His own hand turned the key in the studio door behind him.

* * *

The deafness which had increased so much with failing strength, formed at once the necessity and the excuse for the detached life he loved and would perhaps in any case have chosen. The long walks about Rome, notebook in pocket, without which he could not live, and the friends and strangers who dropped by the score into his studio and climbed the steep stairs to the tiny apartment—these, with his books and home, sufficed him.

It was an amusement to those who knew him well to hear it said that he had closely "studied" this or that Master. There was not a foot of Rome he did not know by heart, and the banks of the Tiber saw him almost daily; but, in the more than nine years of Italy, it is doubtful if he entered her galleries and museums as

many times. When he did visit a museum, it was in a swift and casual way, which appeared to take note of nothing; yet so accurately did that sensitized plate which was his brain receive and retain impressions, that one of the most painstaking students of pictures in America used to say he was the only man he knew who had really *seen* the Galleries.

An intensely rapid workman, he was impatient with those who "thought out their pictures while painting them"; one should not approach a canvas until he knew not only what he wanted to do, but how to do it. His own pictures, he often said, were painted while out walking. "Niggling" and "messing" were unpardonable offences. He himself painted as if playing on that musical instrument to which he had likened the painter's palette.

Entirely modest, in matters of art he was also entirely immovable. It was not that he disregarded opinion but rather seemed not to hear it; was not so much scornful as tranquilly indifferent. Absorbed in the effort to render clearly his own vision, he paid little attention to what others might think of it.

"Several times in his short life," writes an artist friend, "he saw fashions in art change completely, announced sometimes from Paris, sometimes from Boston; he smiled, interested or not, and went on his way. While his sympathies might be said to be with the old masters and the painters of 1830, he owed little to any particular master or school; and while he spent the last ten years of his life in the very home of Italian art, which he appreciated and admired, he was no more Italian in his work than he had been in America, and continued to follow his own predilections in choice of subject, color and composition."

From the very first he had been aware of following a path not chosen, but revealed; to turn from it a hairsbreadth was to him unthinkable—and to all who knew him. Art, for him, was not a profession—but a vocation; not a large prepossession, nor a more or less absorbing occupation, not even the chief business of his life; it *was* life,—his reason for being here, the justification of his existence, and to it he gave the whole of life. The unfulfilled aspiration of that life was for opportunity to do large mural decoration, the thing for which he believed himself most of all fitted and designed.

Loving exceedingly all forms of beauty, he attained an almost anchoretic disdain of beautiful luxury for himself. Such treasures as he possessed remained in storage across an ocean; his own studio was the barest in Rome. This serene detachment entered into everything. Sensitive beyond others to the gradations and vibrations of color, yet he was amused by their small agonies over trifles. Asked by one pained devotee of the beautiful how he could "bear" three conflicting crimson, red and magenta boxes which happened to hold his materials on the studio table, the careless answer was profoudly characteristic.

"Oh—I just change one of them a little, when I look at them, in my mind."

In his early days he had been fond of weird subjects, which he painted with a Dorê-like power. Such were the "Burial of a Suicide,"—"Remorse" and others. But as the shadow deepened about his own life, he turned from all such themes and steadily invoked health, joy, beauty. The pictures of his most suffering years are fullest of serenity and a large repose.

Three months before his death he said: "I think I

have learned my trade ; now if I have even three years more, I will paint something."

Like most gifted and all very sane souls, he possessed an inextinguishable sense of humor, and everything in the world interested him—things scientific, social, or merely human ; his sympathies were with the people, whose life struggles he had intimately known. Yet his artistic vision was (except implicitly) of none of these things, and he delivered without question the word of beauty which had been given him to say. Anything else would have been for him mere affectation or betrayal.

The fatality which set his paths always away from the great art centres, and gatherings of artists, together with long illness and that most isolating of all infirmities, deafness, made him probably the least known art-personality of his day. He had hardly met a half-dozen of his famous contemporaries in any country. Among Americans, almost the only painter he saw much of in the last decade of his life was that greatly imaginative artist, to whom he had been sometimes likened, another Roman by adoption, the dear friend of later years—Elihu Vedder. An unfinished portrait remains as witness of that friendship.

Nor did he see much more of the Italian artists. The Italians, from the first, had repaid the love he bore their country by their understanding of his art. Some of the acutest criticisms of it have been written by them. He felt deeply their generosity to the foreigner, who could make so little return. He was admitted cordially to their exhibitions, given an entire room in their International of 1904, and three of his canvases ("Beggars," "Smugglers," and "German Students in a Villa") were hanging by invitation on the walls of their

central palace in the International exhibition of 1910, at the time of his death. From his own country he had received no invitation. Diego Angeli, the foremost art-critic of Italy, who loved "the tremendous light of his canvases," and had written many and noble notices of his work during his life, wrote not less nobly of his death, voicing the sorrow of both artists and Italians, for in Italy the loss of an artist is felt to be a public loss.

Deeply as he loved Italy, he never willingly accepted the long separation from his own country, and it was in deference to his American sentiment that the young artist of the next generation in the family was sent from Europe to study in American art-schools, rather than to Paris. He cherished to the last the hope of bringing his work "home," and under the increasing urgency of Americans who flocked annually through the Roman studio, had brought himself to face the formidable problem of trans-oceanic exhibitions which he knew he himself could not see. The initial steps were already being taken—when the end came.

In tracing the growth of his work, especially in later years, not a little difficulty and confusion arises from the fact that on more than one occasion he was separated for years together from his pictures, and upon reunion, he promptly proceeded to paint most of them over, ending by declaring with Titian that this was, in many cases, the ideal mode. Thus it happens that pictures considered as finished, signed and shown, years ago, were completely transfigured in the last two years of his life, on being sent to Rome, after eight years of absence.

To say that because a painter has escaped the influence of particular schools and masters he has therefore grown up uninfluenced, would be absurd. The artist is influenced by everything—by all life and all en-

vironment. But in the sense in which the phrase is ordinarily used, the art of very few men can have been freer of special influence and direction. Such influences as were, resulted naturally, not arbitrarily imposed, but the free, often unconscious selection of the seeking artist's spirit. From this point of view, there is deeper truth than usual in the assertion of his early manhood :—

"Whatever there is of good or bad in my work is really mine."

Deeper still—in his words near the close of life :

"It is my work which is really *I*."

FEEDING PEACOCKS

IN PRAISE OF DIONYSOS

TWILIGHT-MOONLIGHT

THE CHILD (NOT THE CHRIST)

PORTRAIT

PURSUIT

THE LOVE SONG

DECORATIVE LANDSCAPE

GERMAN SEMINARISTS IN A ROMAN VILLA

HARMONY

DANCE AT THE END OF THE DAY

BEGGARS

PORTRAIT OF ELIHU VEDDER

MOONRISE BEHIND CYPRESSES

BATHER

AFTER THE BATH

PAINTINGS
BY
Charles Walter Stetson

OILS.

1 Summer Joy. (1901)

2 After the Bath. (1910)

3 Agnese. (1905)

4 The Love Song. (1898-1910)

5 A Sapphic. (1891)

6 Moonrise Behind Cypresses. (1903)

7 Bather. (1905)

8 Decorative Landscape. (1903)
Lent by Mrs. Walter S. Heineman, Pasadena, California.

9 Golden Twilight. (1903)

10 Pale Moonrise. (1905)

11 Mother Nursing Child. (1887)

12 Harmony. (1900-1905)

13 Twilight-Moonlight. (1905)

14 Beggars. (1911)

15 Holy Family. (1905)

16 Coast of Spain. (1907)

17 A Bacchic Dance. (1902)

18 Smugglers. (1910)

19 Opalescent Twilight. Spring. (1906)

20 Portrait of Elihu Vedder. (Unfinished)

21 Sunset, Viareggio. (1904)

22 Landscape. (1900-1901)

23 Life-sized Portrait of a Magnolia. (1889)

24 Feeding Peacocks. (1893-1910)
Lent by Miss Kate Fowler, Pasadena, California.

25 Stone Pines, Red Sunset. (1911)

26 German Seminarists in a Roman Villa. (1906-1909)
Lent by Mrs. Margaret B. Fowler, Pasadena, California.

27 A Ceremonial. (1904)
Lent by Mrs. Coonley Ward, Chicago.

28 A Lake. (1900)

29 Adelaide. (1890)

30 A Joyous Band. (1900-1910)

31 Gathering Herbs. (1907)

32 Girl at a Fountain. (1909)
Lent by Mrs. Coonley Ward, Chicago.

33 Fantasy. (After 1902)

34 Mariposa Lilies. (1889)

35 A Lyric. (1908)
Lent by Miss Kate Fowler, Pasadena, California.

36 Moonlight in the Pineta, Viareggio. (1904)

37 Portrait of Grace Ellery Channing-Stetson. (1903)

38 In Praise of Dionysos. (1899-1901)

39 Portrait Sketch, Katharine Beecher Stetson. (1904)

40 October. (1910)

41 Susannah and the Elders. (1890-1911)

42 Pursuit. (1905)

43 Twilight Mists, Souvenir of Maremma. (1911)

44 Over the Valley. (1904)

45 Moonlight in a Villa. (1906)

46 Portrait of the Artist's Father. (1891)

47 A Little Difference. (1906).

48 Cherokee Roses. (1898)

49 Caprice. (Sketch.) (1909)

50 Mists Rising at Sunset. (1908)
Lent by Miss Kate Fowler, Pasadena, California.

51 Moonrise in Mid-Ocean. (1908)

52 A Shadowed Path. (1883-1910)

53 Song Forgotten. (1900-1910)

54 The White Sky. (1907)

55 Girls with Banner.

56 Sketch for a Library Frieze (XIV Century). Dante and Chaucer. (1901)

57 The Long Girdle. (1898-1904)
Lent by Mrs. Margaret B. Fowler, Pasadena, California.

58 A Franciscan on the Sands

59 Burning Vines. (1906)

60 Portrait of Karleton Hackett, Esq., and Miss Dorothy Hackett.
Lent by Karleton Hackett, Esq., Chicago.

61 The Child (Not the Christ). (1897-1905)

WATER COLORS.

62 A Shower by the Tiber. (1908)

63 Pines and Poppies. (1903)

64 **Romantic Landscape.** (1903)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

65 **Moonlight, Houthem bei Maastrcht. S. Holland.** (1901)

66 **Moonlight, the Pineta, Viareggio.** (1907)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

67 **A Sea Horse.** (1905)

68 **Moonlight in a Villa.** (1906)

69 **A Shrine, South Holland.** (1901)
Lent by Miss Constance Snow, Boston.

70 **La Fossa, Viareggio, Moonlight.** (1903)

71 **Figures Under a Tree.** (1901)

72 **Moonrise Behind Shipping.** (1903)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

73 **After Rain.** (1903)

74 **A Green Hill.** (1901)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

75 **Burden Bearers.** (1903)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

76 **Fête Champètre.** (1910)

77 **A Californian Garden.** (1900)

78 **A Stream in Maremma.** (1907)

79 **A Mediterranean Memory.** (1901)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

80 **Salutation.** (1903)
Lent by Miss Constance Snow, Boston.

81 **Near the Edge of the Ancient Burial Ground, Annapolis, B. C.** (1882)

82 **Golden Twilight.** (1901)

83 **Girls Under a Tree.** (1901)

84 **Knights on Horseback.** (1901)

85 **A Dance at the End of the Day.** (1901)

86 **Laguna Beach.** (1899)

87 **Landscape.** (1901)

88 **A Lake.** (1910)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

89 **Telling the Secret.** (1901)

90 **Franciscan Sisters.** (1907)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

91 **Moonlight and Oaks.** (1896)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

92 **On the Road to Naples.** (1906)

93 **Twilight, Snow Mountains.** (1896)

94 **Afterglow.** (1903)

95 **A Vigil.** (1901)

96 **Landscape.** (1907)
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

97 **A Sacrifice Under Eucalyptus Trees.** (1889)

98 The Fountain.
Lent by Miss Augusta Senter, Pasadena, California.

ETCHINGS FROM PAINTINGS.

99 Landscape, Corot—First State. (1884)

100 Landscape, Corot—Second State. (1884)

101 Head, Couture. (1884)

102 Landscape, Corot. (1884)

103 Head, Couture. (1884)

ORIGINAL ETCHINGS.

104 Dawn. (1881)

105 Moon Behind Windmill. (1882)

106 Head. (1882)

107 Landscape with Figures, Second Proof. (1884)

108 Landscape with Figures, Third Proof. (1885)

109 Landscape. (1881)

110 Just After Sunset. (1884)

111 Landscape. (1882)

112 Leaning Trees near Railroad, Cranston, Rhode Island. (1881)

113 The Shore. (1881)

114 Evening. (1885)